

**Field Conference Call – Meeting Notes**  
**Monday, September 19, 2022 – 1:30 pm ET**

**Internal Teams Site – Click here: [ORD Field Community](#)**

**1. Welcome**

Rachel Ramoni, DMD, ScD

Dr. Ramoni welcomed attendees and highlighted the agenda while acknowledging the work of several groups and the recent ACOS-R/NAVREF annual meeting.

**2. ORD / Research Enterprise**

Grant Huang, MPH, PhD

• **ACOS-R / NAVREF Annual Meeting Recap**

NAVREF/ACOS-R Annual Meeting was held from September 11-14. Dr. Huang provided a brief summary of activities and acknowledged the ACOS-Rs who helped plan the meeting, especially Dr. Gery Schulteis (the full list of committee members is attached). Drs. Clancy and Ramoni gave keynotes that highlighted the directions and opportunities for the research enterprise. A pre-meeting session and post-meeting session with ACOS-Rs enabled good dialog between ORD and ACOS-Rs on various topics including the CERNER/EHRM transition and organizational realignment. Other sessions addressed Field Operations, enterprise tools, best practices and efforts in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Subgroup meetings were also held including on involving smaller/lesser complexity VA medical centers. Links to slides can be found at <https://navref.org/page-18245> and ORD will be developing a folder with the same material. ORD will also be identifying ways to better help ACOS-Rs with talking points about major activities to help with local/facility communications.

• **Update on ORD enterprise transformation initiative**

Since several updates and information was provided at the ACOS-R, attendees were referred to the above conference link. It was noted that October 1 is a key date for enacting some transformation efforts.

Questions, concerns, or feedback about the SharePoint, the Research Enterprise can be submitted through the feedback form and email address. Any feedback submitted through the feedback form will be anonymous while messages sent through the email will enable us to respond to your questions and concerns directly. The anonymous feedback form is

available at: <https://tinyurl.com/ResearchEnterpriseFeedback>. The feedback email address is: [VHAORDResearchEntFb@va.gov](mailto:VHAORDResearchEntFb@va.gov).

- **Research Protections & Policy**

- **Announce/remind about the VAEDA launch** Angela Foster

An announcement was made regarding the enterprise launch of the VA Electronic Determination Aid (VAEDA). VAEDA is the new enterprise resource intended to standardize the research determination process. VAEDA was successfully soft launched at 18 VA sites for 6 months. During that time, over 500 determinations were generated in the system. VAEDA is available to all VA personnel using your PIV credentials. You can find more information on the VAEDA webpage, located on the ORD website under ORPPE. Additionally, a national webinar will be held Wednesday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at 2PM to announce the enterprise launch and provide a demonstration. Links to VAEDA, the webpage, and webinar registration are below.

VAEDA Launch Webinar – Wednesday, September 21 @ 2PM

Webinar Registration:

<https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/veteransaffairs/j.php?RGID=rf7c7700f8acd5ea8530765ff688f91fd>

VAEDA link: <https://vhacdwdwhvda01.vha.med.va.gov/vaeda/home#/>

VAEDA Website: <https://www.research.va.gov/programs/orppe/vaeda.cfm>

- **Electronic Health Record Modernization** Molly Klote, MD, CIP

The demonstration of a Cerner validated research power plan and PowerTrials functionality at Spokane, August 30 – Sep 1 resulted in 28 separate tickets to correct issues found during the running of test patients through the protocol. This was a well-supported event with members of the Mann-Grandstaff (Spokane) staff/leadership, OSIRES, ORO, HIM, PBM, Lab, Radiology, Oncology, and charge services. It is clear that there will be a need to create supplemental training from what is offered by Cerner as well as many guidances and policies to ensure the integrity of the system.

The bottom line is that the OSIRES team is working very hard to ensure that leadership is aware of the challenges that research faces during this implementation. Dr Klote will brief the Health Operation Committee tomorrow morning with results. The final report of the event at Spokane is being finalized.

- 3. **Technology Transfer Program (TTP) updates** Ryan A. Davis, JD

The following TTP updates were mentioned (also see attached slides):

- New Staff
  - Ms. Rebecca Holmes: New Field -Technology Transfer Specialist for Chicago
  - Ms. Trina Voss: New Field -Technology Transfer Specialist for Oregon
  - Ms. Renee Shaw: New Field -Technology Transfer Specialist for Atlanta
  - Ms. Paige Zimmerman: New Field -Technology Transfer Specialist for Missouri
  - Todd Bell hired as GS-9 Program Specialist – starts 9/25.

Information was also presented on:

- On-Line Submission of Invention Disclosures and Certification Information - training/walkthrough for next month's ORD Field Call
- Continue to need help with outstanding Certification Forms

#### **4. Finance Updates**

Matthew Verna

The year-end closeout was discussed and an update provided on the FY23 budget, and a big "THANK YOU" for all of the efforts made to meet the 4% research carryover amount for the sites. As of today, we are showing that approximately 80% of the ORD Current Year budget has been obligated. This is really quite impressive given the fact that the late enactment did not occur until mid-March, and that the actual funding did not make its way down to the field until Mid-April, and so this is a reflection of the hard work you all are doing, as well as ORD, to really bring down and reduce our carryover, and Mr. Verna wanted thank the field for their efforts on this critical activity..

With that said, there is still have a long way to go in a short period of time. There is still \$3.8M in unobligated PY funding out in the field. This funding cannot lapse, and must be obligated NLT Friday 9/30. John Verwiel has sent several communications out to those sites with significant PY balances. Whether you received and email or not, please be sure to check your PY balances and work with your local Fiscal office to clear the Prior Year fund balances soonest.

The last TDA for reimbursements goes out today as well, so please do not collect any reimbursements until after the fiscal year closes. Any collections between now and then will not receive a TDA, and any uncollected and unearned reimbursable agreements must bge adjusted to a zero balance with advance collections being returned.

- **FY23 Budget and Continuing Resolution (CR)**

- Congress must act by 9/30/22 to pass an appropriation for the FY23 Budget. To date only the House has passed FY23 appropriations. If Congress fails to enact a full-year appropriation by 9/30/22, Congress will pass a continuing resolution (CR) at the FY22 level (\$882 million).
- FY23 will likely start under a continuing resolution with an annualized appropriation of \$882 million. This means that pre-planning needs to occur to increase the rate of obligation during the Continuing Resolution and higher funding amounts after enactment FY 2023 Enactment.

- **4% Carryover**

Facilities were notified throughout FY22 that they must meet a <4% carryover of the total FY22 0161A1 allocation. On 9/12/22, ORD sent out the formal guidance detailing this for FY 23 which mirrors this presentation.

- Once the accrual hits the FYY 22 ledgers, ORD will review the overall remaining balance to determine which facilities did not meet the 4% carryover threshold for the entire 0161A1 Fund.
- All carryover 22/23 funds in the 161A1 appropriation must be obligated (not committed) by January 16, 2023.

- **RAFT Execution Report**

Regardless of carryover percentage ALL Stations must complete the RAFT Q4 Expenditure Report by 10/15/22.

- For Service IDs that have expenditures <96%, provide in the remarks sessions how the remaining balance will be spent by 1/16/2023. These remarks will be reviewed by ORD staff who will determine if acceptable. Remarks such as "we will spend the money, or 1358s, or use on payroll" will not be accepted. You must detail your plan.
- In addition, to the required carryover reporting through the Q4 RAFT Report, the Office of Finance and the Director of Field Operations (Tony Laracuente) will reach out individually to stations with significant carryover to determine if a plan is feasible to obligate all carryover at the station by January 16, 2023.
- If available carryover exceeds the requirements of cost transferring payroll (for 6 pay periods), contracts, and/or other planned obligations, then further evaluations will be required which may result in withdrawing the unobligated prior-year funding from these Stations.
- We will discuss this more in a field training on Wed (9/28) from 2-4 eastern. Please direct any questions you may have to the ORD Finance Action group at [ORDFinanceAction@va.gov](mailto:ORDFinanceAction@va.gov)

## **5. ORD Field Update**

- **EPromise Updates**

Tony Laracuente

- ePROMISE:

Changes continue to occur in ePROMISE, reducing the amount of dual entry into VAIRRS. ORD is working with the VAIRRS team to ensure that fields removed in ePROMISE are readily accessible in VAIRRS.

- WOC Workgroup:

ORD is organizing a WOC workgroup to discuss how WOCs will be processed in a centralized HR environment. The group will work with WMC to develop a new process benefiting all sites.

- HR Centralization:

Centralized PDS are still being worked on and will be disseminated soon. ORD is tentatively looking at 2<sup>nd</sup> qtr FY 23 to transition.

- CC101 update:

An explanation of the new formula was provided. A document with detailed information will be sent to the field soon.

- WINRMS Office Hours:

ORD is establishing WINRMS office hours to go over issues. First session in October 2022

- AO Conference:

Please block off Late April for the AO conference. More to come on this meeting when details are available.

## **6. Cross Services updates and announcements**

- **Update on Research Supplements to Promote Diversity Review**

Carol Fowler, PhD

Peer review for the following research supplements has concluded:

RD-22-029 - [Research Supplements to Promote Diversity \(I01, Type 3\)](#) – mentored research supplements for early career scientists from underrepresented populations.

RD-22-030 - [Research Supplements to Promote Collaborations to Enhance Diversity in VA Research \(I01, Type 3\)](#) – intended to support collaborations between VA Investigators and investigators at non-VA institutions, including, but not limited to Minority Serving Institutions.

The review took place as an editorial/write in review utilizing a scoring system where **2**=Highly Meritorious; **3**=Average Merit; **4**=Below-Average Merit. Final scores and reviewer critiques were released via eRA commons on Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup> and funding announcements should be released by October 1, 2022.

**For more information:** [Carol.Fowler@va.gov](mailto:Carol.Fowler@va.gov).

- **RR&D Updates**

Patricia A. Dorn, PhD  
Karen Lohmann Siegel

- Announcement:

**Welcome Peter C. Hunt, PhD, MPH, on Detail as RR&D SPM for Behavioral Health & Social Reintegration**



Peter Cody Hunt is a rehabilitation scientist with a strong background in epidemiology, biostatistics, and data science. He received a Master of Public Health in epidemiology and health services from Boston University and a PhD in rehabilitation sciences and technology from the University of Pittsburgh. He also completed a biostatistics fellowship at the National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and a post-doctoral fellowship in health services research at the Sepulveda VA in Los Angeles. Peter started his career serving as the Special Assistant to Director of the former National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. He then served as a Research Coordinator for two National Spinal Cord Injury Model systems, New England and Pittsburgh, respectively. He joined the VA Long Beach Spinal Cord Injury and Disorders Center in 2008. While his primary responsibility was to provide senior leadership with data management and analyst support, he also served as the Chair of the VA Long Beach Healthcare System IRB committee, a principal investigator on projects aimed to improve spinal cord injury rehabilitation, a grant/journal reviewer for the VA and DoD, the Chair for an RR&D merit review panel on behavioral health and community reintegration, and an adjunct lecturer for research methodology, program evaluation, and grant writing at the Western University of Health Sciences. In 2018, he accepted a position to become the Director of Business Model Development for the VA Allocation Resources Center in Braintree, MA. He is currently working as a Program Analyst for the New England Program Evaluation Center of the VA Connecticut Healthcare System.

**Best Wishes to Ms. Karen Lohmann Siegel, PT, MA, Deputy Director RR&D**



Please join Dr. Dorn & RRD in bidding a fond farewell to Ms. Siegel. She will depart from VA in October 2022. Karen joined VA ORD in January 2013 and became Deputy Director RR&D in July 2014. In addition to her service to Veterans, she served the Nation with nearly 28 years as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Public Health Service, reaching the rank of Captain.

### **Congratulations to VA Boston Healthcare System on new Neuroscience Research Building**



- Review Updates:

SCIENTIFIC REVIEW TIMELINES (refer to applicable [FOA/RFA](#) for details): Please continue to contact [RR&D](#) for guidance and to ask questions.

*Winter 2023 - Merit, Career Development and Research Career Scientist:*

- Updated RFAs published – by October 1, 2022
- Pre-application (LOI and waiver requests) submission deadline – November 1, 2022
- Full award application submission deadline (**no changed/corrected applications after this date**) – December 12, 2022 (as December 10 falls on a Saturday)  
NOTE: Biographical Sketch Format template (OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (**Rev. 10/2021 Approved Through 09/30/2024**)) **is required for all application submissions**
- Scientific Review – February 21 thru March 1, 2023
- Scores released – March 3, 2023
- Summary Statements released – March 24, 2023
- Intent-to-Award notifications – by early April 2023

*Spring 2023 - Center and Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP):*

- NEW RFAs published – March 3, 2022

- Webinar – April 20, 2022, 12 noon: This webinar included an overview of the funding mechanism, what RR&D is looking for and a Q&A session. Contact Dr. Shirley Groer ([Shirley.Groer@va.gov](mailto:Shirley.Groer@va.gov)) for a link to the recording.
- A **NEW** Pre-application (I02) RFA **RX-23-101** has been published for the I50 award mechanism. Pre-application and List of Key Personnel submission deadline – September 1, 2022.
- Full award application submission deadline (**no changed/corrected applications after this date**) – January 11, 2023  
NOTE: Biographical Sketch Format template (OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (**Rev. 10/2021 Approved Through 09/30/2024**)) **is required for all application submissions**
- Scientific Review – April 2023
- Scores and Summary Statements released – April/May 2023
- Administrative Review/Site Visits – May/June 2023
- Intent-to-Award notifications – Subsequent to site visit

*Fall 2022 – SPiRE:*

- Updated SPiRE RFA published – June 27, 2022
- Pre-application (LOI and waiver requests) submission deadline – August 1, 2022
- Full award application submission deadline (**no changed/corrected applications after this date**) – September 12, 2022 (as September 10 falls on a Saturday)  
NOTE: Biographical Sketch Format template (OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (**Rev. 10/2021 Approved Through 09/30/2024**)) **is required for application submissions**
- Scientific Review – October 24, 2022
- Scores and Summary Statements released – November 16, 2022
- Intent-to-Award notifications – early December 2022

*Summer 2022 – Merit, Career Development and Research Career Scientist:*

- **NEW** Summer 2022 RFAs have been published for ALL award opportunities
- *Developing and Validating Alternatives to the Use of Canines, Felines and Non-Human Primates in VA Research (I01): RFA RX-22-032* – published February 10, 2022
  - The goal of this two-phased RFA is to develop and validate alternative methods to the use of sensitive species (e.g., non-human primates (NHP), canines and/or felines) in research. VA RR&D investigators currently funded to conduct sensitive species research are eligible to apply.
  - VA-ORD acknowledges the need for basic and translational research relevant to Veterans' conditions in appropriate models and the parallel need to reduce or eliminate the use of sensitive species.
  - The alternative methods (i.e., animal models not involving sensitive species, microphysiological systems, in vitro systems, in silico models and research involving human subjects) model should be outcome-driven, to determine successful establishment to the comparator model.
  - This RFA will support initial model development (phase one) and if successful, followed by a second phase of model validation.



- To ensure their proposed area of research meets the intent of this FOA/RFA, investigators are strongly encouraged to consult RR&D program purview and portfolio descriptions on the RR&D website and contact the listed Scientific Program Manager (SPM) relevant to their area of study.
- *Durability of Rehabilitation Interventions for VETerans (DRIVE) Award (I01): RFA RX-22-012* – published March 30, 2022
- *RR&D Translational Rehabilitation Research Award: Stage 1 (TRRA-1) (IU1)* – published April 14, 2022
  - Funding mechanism to facilitate the translation of **promising** VA research discoveries in the realm of neurological, musculoskeletal and sensory systems into new treatments for **Veterans to obtain functional gains**.
  - TRRA-1 award provides administrative support for:
    - Preparatory planning for preliminary FDA interactions and early peer-review of the technical merit and feasibility of the approach.
    - An FDA regulatory consultant.
    - A Project Officer/Administrator (preparation and maintenance of a Masterfile, manages regulatory tasks, etc.)
    - Travel (if needed) for team members to meet.
  - Goal is to provide VA PD/PI with funding for services NOT provided through a standard Merit Award and to prepare PD/PI for TRRA-2 – Pre-clinical Good Laboratory Practice testing of the product for FDA IND/IDE submission.
- Pre-application (LOI and waiver requests) submission deadline – May 2, 2022 (as May 1 falls on a Sunday)
- Full award application submission deadline **(no changed/corrected applications after this date)** – June 10, 2022
  - NOTE: Biographical Sketch Format template (OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 **(Rev. 10/2021 Approved Through 09/30/2024)**) **is required for all application submissions**
- Scientific Review – August 8-16, 2022
- Scores released – August 18, 2022
- Summary Statements released – September 9, 2022
- Intent-to-Award notifications – late September 2022

- **HSRD Updates**

David Atkins, MD, MPH

*VINCI*: A VINCI workgroup is continuing to work through 328 projects that may have been affected by incomplete data provisioning. The affected projects represent < 10% of projects that received data from VINCI. The workgroup is focusing on a subset of 74 projects that have indicated that they have results under review for a conference or journal. The VINCI team has addressed two-thirds of those help requests so far. Of the closed help tickets, more than half concluded there was no problem to be addressed; the remainder were provided an updated data set. It is too early in the process to determine whether the updated data will affect the results of any study. An additional group of 44 studies will be receiving notice that they may also have received incomplete data and

instructed to complete a survey and submit a help ticket at [vinci@va.gov](mailto:vinci@va.gov). Updated FAQs and explanatory slides are available at the VINCI Central website.

*Summer SMRB:* Summary statements will be released on September 28. The HSRD funding meeting will be held the following week; HSRD hopes to release Intent-to-fund notices by mid-October.

*Winter round SMRB:* RFAs will be released by end of week (September 23) and will include a new RFA on Rural Health Services Research. Due date for applications is December 12.

*Positions:* The posting for the Deputy Director HSRD has closed and we will be beginning to identify candidates for interviews. The position is a remote position.

- **CSR&D Updates**

Miriam Smyth, PhD

- Fall round - September submissions

As regards the Fall round (September submissions), Receipt and Referral is ongoing. We anticipate completing it by COB on Monday, September 26<sup>th</sup>. CSR&D will be reaching out to stations directly if there are issues with applications where they will permit making corrections, if needed.